roleum products amounted to Rs 6420 crores during April-Nov, 1990 In view of the fluctuating prices of crude oil in the international market, it is difficult to precisely estimate the country's import bill for the financial year 1990-91 at this stage

(b) The Key elements of the export strategy are availability of raw materials, components and capital goods at near world prices, Strengthening export incentive Schemes, improvement in the infrastructural facilities and efficient demand management policies Simultaneously, efforts are also being made to increase exports to hard currency areas and to cut export costs

Setting up a joint working group on project exports

53 SHRI V NARAYANASAMY Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state

(a) whether Government propose to set up a Joint Working Group on project exports to look into the policy and procedure related problems of the Indian project exports,

(b) whether it is a fact that India's share in the world project market is less than 1 per cent, and

(c) which are the areas that India has concentrated in the fields of project exports?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SHANTILAL PURUSHOTTAMDAS PATEL) (a) A Working Group comprising representatives of the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Finance, Reserve Bank of India, Export Credit Guarantee Corporation Limited, Exporters, Commercial Bankers with EXIM Bank as focal point already exists for clearance of bids for Indian project exports, wherein funded/non-funded facilities are required for execution of projects Also, a High Level Project Promotion Committee for Tracking and Monitoring of overseas projects funded by the Multilateral Agencies has been set up

(b) Yes, Sir

(c) Project exports from India are in the field of civil construction projects, industrial turnkey projects, consultancy and operations/maintenance contracts

Vacancies in J & K High Court

54 SHRI SHABBIR AHMAD SALARIA Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state

(a) for how long the J & K High Court has been working below the sanctioned strength, and

(b) what are the category-wise arrears of cases in J & K High Court at present?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (DR SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY) (a) The Jammu and Kashmir High Court has functioned below its sanctioned strength of 7 permanent Judges from 3-8-89 till 11-11-90; thereafter, the High Court has been functioning with its full sanctioned strength

(b) As on 31-12-89, the Jammu and Kashmir High Court had 38518 Civil and 3581 Criminal cases pending before it

Opinion of ASSOCHEIM on levy of consignment tax

55. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA· Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) whether the Asociated Chambers of Commerce and Industry has urged Government not to levy consignment tax on inter-State movement of goods in the interest of country's economy,

(b) if so, what is Central Government's reaction thereto,

(c) whether the consumers, trade and industry will be affected to levy of consignment tax and the development of small and industrially backward States would be hampered, and

(d) whether Government propose to review their decision in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) (a) Yes, Sir

(b) and (c) Tht proposal to levy tax on inter-State consignment of goods is intended to check large scale avoidance of tax through the medium of inter-State consignment of goods, since central sales tax cannot be levied on such consignments At the Inter State Council Meeting held on 10th October, 1990, it was decided to convene a meeting of the Finance Ministers of all States to work out a consensus on the guidelines in regard to grant of exemption Since no final decision regarding the scope of the levy has been taken, the question of consumers trade and industry being affected or development of small and industrially backward States being hampered does not arise

(d) Does not arise.

Study by EEPC on the impact of Gulf crisis

56 SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state

(a) whether Government have asked the Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC) to carry out a study on the impact of the current Gulf crisis on the country's engineering export and also initiate necessary measures to achieve the export targets,

(b) if so, by when the EEPC would conduct study in this regard and submit its report to Government, and

(c) what assistance Government propose to give to EEPC to boost its export performance?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SHANTILAL PURUSHOTTAMDAS PATEL) (a) and (b) EEPC was asked in August, 1990 to undertake a study on the impact of the present crisis in the Gulf region on export of engineering products from India to the Gulf region The EEPC conducted the study and reported erosion of liquidity among local traders due to substantial transfer of funds outside arising out of fear of warfare Bank finance has also come down and high premiums due to war risks have increased shipping costs Measures proposed to achieve the export target include concerted promotional efforts in the markets of Iran, Egypt, Oman, Bahrain and UAE, Buyer-seller meets, contact promotion and exhibitions in these countries and giving more attention to future Govt projects in this region

(c) An Empowered Committee has been set up in the Ministry of Commerce to attend to the problems faced by exporters and to take decisions so that India's exports do not suffer Some specific actions taken by this Committee to help exporters include activisation of the Tramp Committee under the Chairmanship of Chairman, Bombay Port Trust, to resolve shipping problems of exporters, consideration of all cases of extension of packing credit beyond 180 days upto 270 days for exports to Gulf countries at a concessive rate of interest @9 50 per cent p a by Reserve Bank of India, decision to allow inclusion of all export receivables from Iraq and Kuwait in the total current assets and to exclude the quantum of export receivables from the total current assets for reckoning the minimum stipulated Net Working Capial, for arriving at the maximum permissible bank finance Exporters are also permitted to sell the cargo shipped to Iraq and Kuwait but off loaded at other ports to alternative buyers on discount upto 10 per cent without reference to RBI